

A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS IN JOE BIDEN'S INAUGURAL SPEECH

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Abstract

This study examines President Joe Biden's inaugural speech as the 46th President of the United States with a view to ascertaining his compliance (or otherwise) with Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP). A descriptive qualitative methodology was used for the study. Extracts were purposively sampled and subjected to critically analysis using the conversational maxims. The result of the analysis reveals that all the four maxims of the Cooperative Principle - the maxims of quantity, quality, manner, and relation were flouted by Joe Biden, and that the maxim of manner is the most flouted of all, basically with the use of pragmatic strategies like metaphors, repetition, tautology and anaphora. Also, simile, metaphor and overstatement (hyperbole) are the tactics used in flouting the remaining maxims of the Cooperative Principle. The study concludes that flouting these maxims is very common in political speeches and most times it is deliberately done to achieve certain rhetorical goals, manipulate information given to the public, or to avoid addressing unbearable truths. The study, therefore, recommends that it is important for listeners to critically analyze political speeches to personally discover the speaker's hidden intention for better understanding of the message.

Keywords: Cooperative principles, inaugural speech, Joe Biden, Pragmatics

Introduction

Language is a distinctive attribute of the human species and very fundamental for self fulfilment. It gives a vivid and clear expression to human thought or concept and "forms the bedrock on which most of the social practices in the world operate" (Aluya, 2020: 282). Language is the possession of a group of people and not an individual; and the group that uses any language is referred to as a speech community' (Tinuoye, 1994). It is widely conceived that language and politics are interconnected. Language is for instance, considered the vehicular expression of politics. It is a means by which political discourse and ideas are widely disseminated (Adagbonyin et al., 2016). In a political speech, language plays a crucial role as it builds, establishes and strengthens relationship, expresses ideas, and sells programs and policies. That is why language has been conceived as an important issue in politics (Edem & Aluya, 2019). It is a key factor in political behavior concerning mobilizing people for support and acceptance (Ayeomoni & Akinkuolere, 2012). The linguistic and communicative patterns utilized by political leaders to deliver political speeches to

accomplish their goals is one thing that linguists have so much developed interest in for discourse analyses (Karen, 2022). Inaugural speeches signify the commencement of a new term in office of community or government leaders. The newly elected or appointed leaders use their eloquent and powerful speeches to present their vision and spell out their goals for the community or nation, in clear terms and in such a way as to convince the people that if given maximum support, the goals would be achieved (Trask, 1995, Aluya & Kofoworola, 2020).

Joe Biden is the 46th president of the United States of America and was sworn in at the age of 78 years, making him the oldest president in the nation's history. His inauguration took place on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, marking the beginning of his four-year term as president and Kamala Harris, as the vice president. Biden's inauguration is the 59th in the history of inauguration of American presidents, and this took place on the West Front of the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. (Wikipedia, 2021). The inauguration took place amidst various crises that rocked the boat of the United States at that time. These crises ranged from terrorism, racism,

the COVID-19 pandemic among others, to an attempt to overturn the 2020 United States presidential election, which culminated in, quoting Galston, (2021) ‘an unprecedented assault on the Capitol by an insurrectionary mob of its citizens’, just two weeks before his inauguration. The focus of Biden’s message to the American citizens was on the need for unity in order to sustain the ‘precious’ and ‘fragile’ democracy which they had all fought for and has ‘prevailed’. He pointed out that ‘To overcome these challenges, to restore soul and secure the future of America requires the most elusive of all things in democracy – unity’ (Emmanuel, 2021, Aluya, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Cooperative Principle (CP) was proposed by the great philosopher, H.P. Grice, in his article published in 1975. CP sets the agenda for exploring the strategies for verbal interaction, to ensure that participants generally observe a principle of conversation. This approach focuses on the relationship of signs (semiotics) to their users, but essentially on meaning in context. The CP is basic an assumption that interlocutors normally intend to accomplish purposeful and effective communication in conversation by cooperating with each other. To achieve this goal, therefore, there must be an observance of the four maxims of conversation which he summarized (Grice, 1975:44) as:

“Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged”

The four conversational maxims are listed as follows: Maxim of Quantity, quality, manner and relation. Maxim of quantity demands that speakers make their contribution as informative as required (for the current purpose of the exchange). Also, it demands that speakers are not to make their contribution more informative or less informative than is required. Maxim of quality demands that speakers should try to make their contribution one that is true by not saying what they believe to be false. Also, it requires speakers not to say that for which they lack adequate evidence. Maxim of Relation requires speakers to be relevant, that is, they are say things that are relevant in the context.

Maxim of manner requires interlocutors to be brief, orderly and avoid ambiguous and obscurity of expressions. These maxims represent the normal conversational behaviour of participants. They help to explain a number of regular features in the way people say things. An indication of an awareness of these maxims is expressed in statements known as meta-discourse such as, “To make the long story short...” (showing the maxim of quantity), “As far as I know...” (indicating the maxim of quality). Grice states that observance of the cooperative principle and its subsequent maxims constitute ‘reasonable’ and ‘rational’ behaviour (Grice 1975:46).

Non-Observance of the Maxims

The fact that speakers ‘do not’ always obey maxims in conversation is precisely the essence of Grice’s theory. Grice (1975:49) states that there are numerous conditions whereby the speaker neglects to notice or observe the maxims and spells out ways by which the satisfaction of these maxims may be neglected. Further elaborating on this, Karen (2022), Ali & Abdulmunim (2021: 3-7), explained the five methods of neglecting or failing to notice a maxim. The methods are: *violating a maxim* by simply failing to follow it; *opting out of a maxim* by indicating unwillingness or reluctance to cooperate in the way the maxim requires; *infringing a maxim* (by misleading) when the speaker, due to his or her inability to use the right or correct expression, has no intention of making an implicature; *suspending a maxim* is a case in which a particular event or cultural context forces a speaker not to say something directly because there is no expectation for the maxim to be observed (Thomas, 1995:76) and lastly, *flouting a maxim* which is what this study is set out to observe and analyze in President Joe Biden’s inaugural speech, happens when a speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim without any intention to mislead the hearer.

Flouting a Maxim

According to Thomas (1995:65), Grice clarifies that flouting a maxim is done with the aim of inciting the listener to search for a meaning which is different from the expressed one and leads the audience to discover the specific interpretation which he calls ‘conversational

implicature'. (Also, Brown & Yule, 1983:32). Conversational implicature accounts for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says which was not explicitly stated. For better understanding, let us consider the following examples:

A: *Are you going to the museum today?*

B: *I have an urgent assignment.*

The answer to A's question seems inappropriate on the surface, although, it can be interpreted. Ordinarily, a 'yes' or 'no' response would have been an appropriate response to A's question. However, to interpret B's response, we must depend on the assumption that B is being "relevant" and "informative". Speaker A can therefore figure out that speaker B will probably be busy with his assignment because he has a deadline for its submission rather than go to the museum. In B's response, there is an additional information not contained in what he said. The meaning (not overtly stated) but derived from what is said is known as implicature.

Grice points out that the first three categories of maxims relate to what is said, whereas the fourth one relates to how the utterance is made. These maxims should apply to all interactions irrespective of the subject matter, vocabulary chosen and types of speech act. He claims that interlocutors share implicit knowledge of the maxims, and thus conversational behaviour is governed by them. In a political speech, these maxims can be flouted in various ways to achieve certain rhetorical goals or to manipulate the audience in certain ways. Below are explanations on how the four maxims of quantity, quality, relations and manner earlier listed can be flouted (Ali & Abdulmun'im, 2021: 6-7).

Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

Cutting (2002:36) states that flouting the maxim of quantity happens when the speaker gives pretty much more or less information than the situation requires. For example:

Peter: *Well, how do I look?*

Mary: *Your shoes are nice.*

For this situation Mary has flouted the maxim of quantity by giving data not exactly needed. Peter requests some information about his entire appearance, however, Mary just refers to his shoes. She doesn't state straightforwardly that the shirt or

his pants look decent, which implies that she is less concerned with the rest of what he is wearing. To try not to insult Peter, Mary chooses not to comply with the maxim of quantity. Hence Peter is obliged to gather the hidden meaning of Mary's expression. In the same vein, a politician may provide incomplete or excessively obscure or unclear information to avoid addressing some critical issues or to create ambiguity.

Flouting the Maxim of Quality

Cutting (2002:37) states that flouting a maxim of quality occurs in situations in which the speaker may essentially say something that clearly doesn't refer to what they think. For this situation the speaker talks sarcastically with the goal that the listener will get the hidden meaning of what he says. This happens when the speaker says something which should be seen as blatantly false. (Cutting 2002: 38) proposes a few different ways individuals may flout the maxim of quality by using sarcasm, irony, metaphor, hyperbole and idiom. An illustration of this from Thomas (1995:68) is a discussion hung on a train ride, where a child who simply needs to peruse a book is being upset by a talkative stranger (Thomas 1995:68):

A: *What do you do?*

B: *I'm an instructor.*

A: *Where do you instruct?*

B: *Outer Mongolia*

A: *Sorry I inquired!*

For this situation, the reaction from speaker B was a conscious non-observance of the maxim of quality when she said 'Outer Mongolia', where an implicature was created, which told the other individual to search for an extra meaning or that she needed to be left alone (Thomas 1995:68 69). Similarly, there are situations in which politicians make unsubstantiated claims or assertions, thereby spreading misinformation, engage in deceitful arguments to manipulate public opinion or mislead the audience.

Flouting the maxim of Relation or Relevance

Flouting the maxim of relation implies making contributions irrelevant to the subject of discussion due to absent-mindedness, or not paying attention to what the other person is saying. The speaker sometimes changes the subject of

discussion to puzzle the audience. For instance:

A: "My girl can be such a specialist in some cases!"

B: "Stunning climate, right?"

It is clear that B's assertion above shows the flouting of maxim of relation since B doesn't give the important assertion towards A's expression. It tends to be presumed that B isn't keen on A's expression about her girl who can be a specialist by changing the subject of their discussion. B changes the line of discussion to a 'protected' theme. Sometimes, diversion tactics are used in political speeches to flout this maxim by using diversion strategy to avoid addressing important issues or to shift the focus of the audience away from whatever might be identified as their lapses.

Flouting the Maxim of Manner

The maxim of manner states: Avoid obscurity of expression, that is, don't use words or phrases that are hard to understand; avoid ambiguity; be brief, be orderly. All these relate, not to the content of what the speaker says, but the way what is said is expressed. Flouting these sub-maxims involves using words and phrases your audience doesn't know or you do not expect your audience to understand, (Karen, 2022), when the speaker purposely neglects to notice the saying by not being brief, or using ambiguous words (Cutting, 2002:38). For instance:

A: *Where are you off to?*

B: *I was thinking of going out to get some of that funny white stuff for somebody*

A: *Ok, but don't be long – dinner's nearly ready* (Ibid).

B talks in an obscure way, referencing "funny white stuff" and "somebody", since he is attempting to abstain from saying "ice cream" and "Michelle", with the goal that his little girl doesn't get energized and requests the frozen yogurt before her feast. Flouting this maxim involves being unclear, ambiguous or excessively wordy in the speech. In political speeches, sometimes obscure and/or complex language (most times, figurative) are used to conceal the speaker's true intentions, to confuse or mislead the public about their positions in certain critical arguments.

Literature Review

Analyzing political speeches has been of great interest to linguists over the years, and this

has motivated a lot of researches in the field to examine language patterns employed in the delivery of political addresses to achieve specific goals (Karen, 2022; Aluya & Edem, 2023). There are quite a number of research studies on President Joseph Biden's inaugural speech since its delivery in 2021, some of which have been considered in this study for review. Pertinent to the subject of this study is the research conducted by Ali and Abdulmun'im (2020) where they critically analyzed the text of the United State of America First 2020 Presidential Debate to discover how Grice's Cooperative Principle was flouted by Joe Biden and Donald trump (both aspirants for the 2020 United States of America presidential election), and the pragmatic strategies used as tools to flout these maxims. The study reveals that the maxim of relation is the most flouted of the maxims, and that metaphor, overstatement and hyperbole are the pragmatic strategies used respectively to indicate non-observance of the maxims.

Some linguistic scholars, as said earlier, have also contributed to knowledge by conducting some pragmatic analyses of President Joe Biden's 2021 inaugural address. For example, Nurkhamidah (2021) critically investigated the use of rhetorical appeals in President Joe Biden's inaugural address, hinging the study on Aristotelian Rhetorical Theory. The result of their findings from the data analyzed shows that there was an evidence of Joe Biden's use of all the three Aristotelian rhetoric strategies namely: ethos, pathos and logos in his inaugural speech, mainly for the purpose of engaging and building trust in American citizen. The study concluded that a good speaker can employ all the three elements of the rhetorical theory and imply them in both speech and writing.

Ahmed and Amir (2021) analyzed the use of direct and indirect speech acts in President Joe Biden's inaugural speech, using as a base for the study, J.L. Austin and John Searle's Speech Act Theory. They pointed out that the speech includes maximum 'directive and representative acts while the use of direct speech act was also evident'. The study reveals, through the speech act analysis, the informative and supporting disposition of the President of the United States.

Hammangabdo (2021) on his part, carried out a stylistic analysis of cohesion and coherence in Biden's speech, basing the research on Reader-Response/Transactional Theory and Functionalist Theory of M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. The result of the study shows that adopted the style of his speech for 'Deliberative, Forensic and Epidictic' reasons, and that the speech is both cohesive and coherent, a proof that Biden has a good knowledge of the context of the text as well as its grammatical features.

The research conducted by Al-Khawaldeh (2023) was a critical analysis of the use of rhetoric as persuasive strategies in Joe Biden's inaugural speech, using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework. Thematic analysis of the data, according to them, showed that Biden's speech featured some persuasive strategies such as creativity, metaphor, contrast, indirectness, reference and intertextuality which he utilized to address critical issues. To illustrate intertextuality, in the data analysis, Biden made reference to a

quote from the speech of one of the American presidents to win the hearts of American citizens and the international community concerning his vision and policy. He also employed the technique of indirectness to address very sensitive political issues to gain the advantage of his political opponents. Lastly, the study reveals that Biden's referencing style depicted his interest in American democracy as well as the unity, equality and freedom of the citizens.

Method of Data Analysis

This research investigates the inaugural speech of the President Joe Biden, the newly elected president of the United States of America on January 20, 2021 to discover his non-observance of the four maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle, and the strategies he used to flout them. A descriptive qualitative methodology was used for data analysis and a purposive sampling method, whereby extracts from the speech were purposely selected to analyze each variable presented, was adopted.

Data Analysis and Discussion

As characteristic of speeches of politicians, the use of rhetoric devices has been found to be the most frequently used pragmatic strategy employed by Joe Biden to make a strong impression in the minds of his audience or make his message to be understood. However, in the process of doing this, he flouted Grice's maxims of conversation as revealed in the analysis.

Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

One of the ways by which Joe Biden flouted this maxim is the use of metaphor and simile. This he did with the intention of not mentioning the names of his opponents who prior to that period stirred up violence that nearly made his being sworn in as the president to be jeopardized. According to Nurkhamidah (2021), a few weeks before Joe Biden's inauguration as the President of the United States of America, there was an attack on the Capitol Building at the time the congress was verifying Biden's victory in the just concluded 2020 election, by Donald Trump's supporters after Trump (Biden's opponent) declared that the election was 'a fraud'. The chaos resulted in fatality. Quoting Nurkhamidah (2021), "five people died in the Capitol attack including a woman, multiple officers injured, and the congress was evacuated to prevent violence from the protestor". The above incidence gives us a background information on the reason for Biden's utterance in the excerpt below:

Ex. 1. 'And here we stand just days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of our democracy, to drive us from this sacred ground. It did not happen, it will never happen, not today, not tomorrow, not ever. Not ever'

He resorted to giving less information about who the mastermind(s) were (invariably, Donald Trump and his supporters) to the audience so as not to stir up another chaos, by using metaphoric expressions to hide their identity, or to describe the ugly situation, as shown in the following examples:

Ex. 2: 'I know speaking of unity can sound like a foolish fantasy these days'

In other words, Biden himself openly agreed that the nation is set against itself by admitting that his attempt to bring the two parties (Democratic Party and Republican Party) together seems to be a herculean task, an unrealistic 'foolish fantasy', especially with the violence that preceded his election into office. However, he

is ready to give whatever it would take to make it happen.

Ex. 3 'I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real'.

With the statement above, it is clear that there had been an age-long crisis between the Democrats and the Republicans that are yet to be resolved and are likely to threaten America's democracy and unity. These crises are what Biden refers to as 'forces that divide'.

Ex. 4: 'We can see each other not as adversaries but as neighbours. (simile) We can treat each other with dignity and respect. We can join forces, stop the shouting and lower the temperature.' (metaphor).

The statement above is a further call to unity between the two parties. They are not to see each other as enemies but rather as partners ('neighbours') in building a formidable nation free of violence ('shouting' and 'temperature'). More examples of metaphoric expressions are listed below:

Ex.5: 'We'll press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibility'.

The metaphoric expression 'winter of peril' was used to indicate the period during which an attack was launched against the Capitol. This happened during winter, a period that ordinarily should be for celebration as the citizens just entered the New Year. However, it became a 'winter of peril' wherein the nation was turned into mourning for people that lost their lives during the chaos; a winter associated with violence against America's democracy.

Ex.6: 'We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural versus urban, conservative versus liberal.'

In American politics, and as of the last presidential election in 2020, Democratic Party is associated with the blue colour while the Republican Party is identified with red. The terms 'red states' and 'blue states' refer to states in which voters in the states majorly cast their votes for each party (Wikipedia). Biden belongs to the Democratic Party and his reference to just the colours that each party represents ('...uncivil war that pits red against blue') is a subtle way of not making direct reference to the two political parties in order to avoid more crises. Similarly, the Republicans are the 'conservatives' in the United States, while the Democrats are the 'liberals' (Wikipedia). The Republican philosophy leans more towards individual freedoms, rights and responsibilities while Democrats attach greater importance to equality and social/community responsibility. Rather than mentioning the names of the parties, Biden simply made reference to their ideologies or philosophies.

Ex. 7: 'Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth and there are lies. Lies told for power and for profit. And each of us has a duty and a responsibility as citizens as Americans and especially as leaders. Leaders who are pledged to honour our Constitution to protect our nation. To defend the truth and defeat the lies'.

With these expressions above, Biden subtly appealed for unity between the two parties. However instead of mentioning names or referring to the situation directly, he deliberately used metaphors (a conscious non-observance of the maxim of quality). An implicature was created, leaving the audience to search for the hidden meaning of 'the truth' and 'lies told for power and for profit' (by his opponent), which he also believed they understand and the knowledge will make them to make the right decision to defend and support (him) 'the truth'.

Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

Biden as flouting the maxim of quality which says 'Do not say what you believe to be false; or that for which you lack adequate evidence'. Hyperbole/overstatement is a statement in excess of what is reasonable; an exaggerated language. Examples are found in the following paragraphs:

Ex. 8: (...a few days ago violence sought to shake the Capitol's very foundations).

In describing the intensity of the chaotic situation, Biden used an exaggerated statement that it was so serious enough to shake the foundations the Capitol gigantic building.

Ex. 9: 'Millions of jobs have been lost. Hundreds of thousands of businesses closed.'

The statements above describe the devastating effects of COVID-19 on the American economy and the

people. Can the figures quoted be verified? Does he have adequate evidence for the figures quoted? If not, Joe Biden has deliberately flouted the maxim of quality.

Ex. 10: 'Look, I understand that many of my fellow Americans view the future with fear and trepidation. I understand they worry about their jobs. I understand like their dad they lay in bed at night staring at the ceiling thinking: 'Can I keep my healthcare? Can I pay my mortgage?' Thinking about their families, about what comes next. I promise you; I get it.'

The questions that come to mind from what is implied in the paragraph above are: How many American citizens does Joe Biden know or have a close relationship with as to know 'like their dad' what they 'fear' or are 'worried about'? When they 'lay in bed at night, staring at the ceiling' and what they are 'thinking'? It is very clear that the exaggerated statements were made just to win the hearts of the people and to show that he identifies with their pain.

Flouting the Maxim of Relation

Be relevant. Say things that are relevant in the context. There are also several instances of flouting of Grice's maxim of relevance in the Joe Biden's inaugural speech. A lot of utterances irrelevant to the subject of discussion were made as revealed in the following examples.

Ex. 11: '...And I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength, the strength of our nation, as does President Carter, who I spoke with last night who cannot be with us today, but who we salute for his lifetime of service.'

The adjectival clause '...who I spoke with last night' is a presupposition suggestive of a cordial relationship between Joe Biden and the ex-president. This detail has no relation or relevance to the discourse at that moment.

Ex. 12: 'I've just taken a sacred oath each of those patriots have taken. The oath first sworn by George Washington'.

The extra information on who took the first oath was not necessary since George Washington was part of the patriots to which Biden referred.

Flouting the Maxim of Manner

Flouting the maxim of manner in Joe Biden's inaugural speech is characterized by repetition of syllables, words or phrases. Expressions that ought to have been rendered as simple or compound sentences (with the use of conjunctions) were either repeated or disjointedly rendered as phrases. For example, the word 'cause' and the phrases 'the people' and 'the will of the people' in the excerpt:

Ex. 13: 'Today we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate but of a cause, a cause of democracy. The people - the will of the people - has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded.'

This sentence, in order to observe the maxim of quantity, should have been expressed as:

Today, we celebrate the triumph of not just a candidate, but of a cause of democracy.

The will of the people has been heard and heeded.

The word 'democracy' in:

Ex. 14: 'We've learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile and, at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed'. This could have been expressed thus:

We've learned again that democracy is precious, fragile and, at this hour, my friends, it has prevailed'.

Ex. 15: - The expression: '...I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence here. I thank them from the bottom of my heart' should have simply been rendered as:

I thank my predecessors of both parties present here from the bottom of my heart.

Ex. 16: 'much to' in the example below:

'We'll press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibility. Much to do, much to heal, much to restore, much to build and much to gain'. We'll press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do, heal, restore, build and gain in this winter of peril and possibility.

Tautology: Tautology is a Greek word meaning 'same speech', a kind of semantic anomaly or rhetoric in

which an argument or proposition is repeated in the same or different words. Examples are expression we find in everyday speech, like 'All well and good', 'To all intent and purposes'. We find many instances of this in Joe Biden's speech.

Ex. 17: 'Let's begin to listen to one another again, hear one another, see one another'.

- The words 'listen' and 'hear' are synonyms. Using both of them in the same proposition is an anomaly.

Ex. 18: 'My whole soul is in it today, on this January day. My whole soul is in this'

- The word 'today' and the phrase 'this January day' both refer to the same day.

The words 'anger', 'resentment', 'hatred'; 'violence' and 'lawlessness' used simultaneously in the same utterance below:

Ex. 19: 'Uniting to fight the foes we face- anger, resentment and hatred. Extremism, lawlessness, violence, disease, joblessness and hopelessness'

Consider also 'Bringing together' and 'uniting' (which have the same meaning); and 'America', 'people' and 'nation' in the expression:

Ex. 20: 'Bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our nation'

Ex. 21: 'with unity we can do great things, important things'

Ex. 22: '... only bitterness and fury, ...only exhausting outrage'; This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge'.

Anaphora: This is a regular repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases or clauses. For example, '*We fight in the trenches. We shall fight on the oceans. We shall fight in the sky*'.

Examples of this rhetoric device in Joe Biden's inaugural speech are found in the excerpts below:

Ex. 23: '...the will of the people has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded.'

Ex. 24: '...A cry for racial justice... A cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear now.'

Ex. 25: 'With unity we can do great things, important things. We can right wrongs, we can put people to work in good jobs, we can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome the deadly virus, we can rebuild work, we can rebuild the middle class and make work secure, we can secure racial justice and we can make America once again the leading force for good in the world'

Ex. 26: 'Look, I understand that many of my fellow Americans view the future with fear and trepidation. I understand they worry about their jobs. I understand like their dad they lay in bed at night staring at the ceiling thinking: 'Can I keep my healthcare? Can I pay my mortgage?'

Ex. 27: '...A story of decency and dignity, love and healing, greatness and goodness. May this be the story that guides us. The story that inspires us. And the story that tells ages yet to come that we answered the call of history.'

The use of these repeated expressions is for emphasizing the message. Biden used these judiciously to make the subject emphasized stick in the minds of his audience. He deliberately did this by linking ideas together at the beginning of each sequence of words.

Conclusion

In Joe Biden's inaugural speech, the maxim of manner is the most flouted maxim, basically with the use of metaphor, repetition, tautology and anaphora. The use of rhetoric devices like metaphor, simile, overstatement, hyperbole was employed to flout the maxims of quantity, quality and relation. Non-observance of these maxims in political speeches are, most times,

done intentionally for the purpose of achieving the speaker's persuasive goal, to manipulate the message being passed across to the public, to mislead the listeners or to evade uncomfortable truths. The onus therefore lies on the audience to critically assess or scrutinize political speeches to discover intentions underlying utterances made in the speech so as to make the right judgments or decisions.

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